



COMMISSION NEWS

Arizona Corporation Commission

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LOW-INCOME FAMILIES TO BENEFIT FROM ACC DECISION **Programs Approved to Save Water, Energy & Environment**

PHOENIX – Today, Commissioners approved changes to programs offered by Southwest Gas that will directly aid Arizona's neediest families. The Commissioners required Southwest Gas to commit an additional \$150,000 to low-income assistance and energy efficiency programs.

Southwest Gas' total budget for Low-Income Energy Conservation programs will increase from \$350,000 to \$500,000.

Southwest Gas offers several programs to help low-income customers manage their bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The Low Income Energy Conservation Program provides weatherization, health and safety improvements and emergency bill assistance to Southwest Gas customers with household incomes of 150 percent, or less, of the federal poverty guidelines.

"Our decision doubles the yearly maximum for emergency bill assistance from \$200 to \$400 per household," Commission Chairman Mike Gleason said.

The emergency bill assistance program is administered statewide through the Arizona Community Action Association (www.azcaa.org).

"Today's decision also commits Southwest Gas to spending \$450,000 on weatherization assistance," Commissioner Gary Pierce said.

Weatherization can include replacement windows, leaking hot water valves or deteriorated duct systems; repair or replacement of thermostats; installation of low flow shower heads; storm window installation; enhanced insulation or improvement of heating and cooling systems. The limit on weatherization expenditures for low-income households will increase from \$1,500 to \$3,000.

Under certain conditions, renters may also participate in the weatherization program.

“It is my personal belief that there shouldn’t be a home added or remodeled in Arizona that isn’t more energy-efficient and water efficient,” Commissioner Jeff Hatch-Miller said. “This program will keep more money in peoples’ pockets.”

The Commissioners noted the expected environmental benefits resulting from the energy efficiency upgrades. According to Southwest Gas’ estimates, the program will avoid close to 17 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions. Avoided nitrogen oxide emissions total 3,175 pounds. The programs will result in a water savings of 4.3 million gallons.

“These numbers are extraordinary. We hear every day about global warming and about efforts to fight global warming. But right now, right here, we are doing something about global warming,” Commissioner Kris Mayes said.

“Today’s vote expands our efforts to conserve energy, avoid unnecessary air emissions and help Arizona’s needy,” Commissioner Bill Mundell added. “I am proud of the Commission’s record on energy efficiency, global warming and water conservation. We all must do our part to preserve the environment for future generations.”

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